

Why This Information Is Important To You

Sterilization is an operation that is meant to make it impossible for you to father children. This booklet tells about the operation for a man, called vasectomy, and what you should know before you have the operation. You should read all of this paper.

Both men and women can be sterilized. If you would like to know about sterilization for a woman, ask your doctor or clinic for that information.

If Medicaid Is To Pay For Your Sterilization, Certain Rules Must Be Met:

- You must be at least 21 years old.
- You must wait at least 30 days to have the operation after you sign the consent (permission) form.
- You may, if you choose, bring someone with you when you sign the consent form.
- Your consent is good for 180 days (6 months) from the date you sign the consent form.
- Your consent to sterilization cannot be obtained while you are under the influence of alcohol or other substances that affect your ability to think clearly.

Making Up Your Mind

Being sterilized is completely up to you. No one can force you to be sterilized. If you decide not to be sterilized, it will not affect your benefits or medical treatment.

Make sure you do not want to father children ever again, for any reason, before you decide to be sterilized.

If you have decided not to father children again, then having a vasectomy is a safe, effective operation which takes about 15 - 20 minutes. You can usually go home shortly after the operation.

What is a vasectomy?

A vasectomy is done in a doctor's office or clinic. Under local anesthesia, the doctor closes off the sperm ducts (tubes) so that sperm cannot get through these ducts into the semen (the fluid ejected at climax). When there is no sperm in the semen, you cannot cause a pregnancy. (See figure below.)



Only the sperm is blocked, not the liquid part of the semen. You will still ejaculate (eject fluid) as before. A vasectomy will not change your hormones and it is not castration (the testicles are not removed).

There are discomforts, risks and benefits involved with any operation, and you should be aware of them before you have a vasectomy. Talk with your doctor or clinic.

A vasectomy is considered permanent and cannot be undone.

Is this operation guaranteed to work?

Vasectomy works almost all the time, but sometimes 1 man out of every 1,000 will still be able to get a woman pregnant. This is usually because the two ends of the sperm duct have grown back together.

Having a vasectomy is more than 99% effective. (This is higher than all other ways of preventing pregnancy.)

What if I do want more children?

If you are not ready to have a vasectomy, then there are other ways of preventing pregnancy available to you and your partner. Temporary ways of preventing pregnancy for a man are condoms (rubbers) and the Natural Method. Temporary ways of preventing pregnancy for a woman are the pill, the IUD, the diaphragm, contraceptive foam, the Norplant implant, Depo-Provera shots, condoms (rubbers) and the Natural Method. These ways are 85 to 98% effective in preventing pregnancy if used the right way every time you have sex.

Talk to your doctor or clinic if you want information or counseling on any of these choices.

When can I have a vasectomy?

You can have a vasectomy at any time in your life. For Medicaid to pay for the operation, you must be at least 21 years of age.

You can have the operation even if you are married or if you do not have children.

I have decided to have a vasectomy, now what?

Your consent must be given at least 30 days before you have a vasectomy. Your consent lasts for 180 days (6 months) after you sign the form.

Remember

If you decide you don't want to have a vasectomy after all, you can change your mind at any time.

Summary

If you are sure you do not want to father children and you want to become permanently sterile, then having your tubes tied is a safe, effective operation.

Be Sure To Take This Paper and Your Signed Consent Form With You.